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**FILED** *July 15, 2008*  
**NEW JERSEY BOARD OF  
SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS**  
*K. W. Gormack*  
*Exec. Director*

STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

IN THE MATTER OF THE SUSPENSION  
OR REVOCATION OF THE LICENSE OF

**CHRISTINE ROBERTELLO, MSW, LCSW**  
**License No. 44SC00099600**

TO PRACTICE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK  
IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Administrative Action

**CONSENT ORDER**

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Social Work Examiners (the "Board") upon receipt of information that respondent Christine Robertello ("respondent") had engaged in a personal relationship with a client during and immediately after the time the client was engaged in therapy with respondent. On March 27, 2006, respondent appeared without counsel at an inquiry into this matter conducted by a committee of the Board.

At the inquiry, respondent testified that she first met C.J. when he sought therapy for his daughter, D.J. After that first session, D.J. never returned, but C.J. began individual therapy, and continued treatment for approximately four months; in addition, C.J. called

frequently about problems within his family, including when his wife was drunk, abusive or out of control. Respondent further testified that C.J.'s children occasionally contacted her to discuss family crises, even though she did not see them therapeutically. Respondent testified that C.J. did not make any further appointments with her after his insurance ran out, although she offered to continue to treat him. Several weeks after he stopped therapy, they ran into each other in a store, and then went to a nearby restaurant for lunch. At that time, C.J. expressed feelings for respondent, and respondent told C.J. that she could no longer treat him. She stated, however, that she remained in contact with C.J. after that conversation. She visited him frequently when he was hospitalized, helped let the movers into his apartment when he moved, and it is alleged that C.J. and his children joined her family on vacation twice, although respondent testified that the second time, C.J. and his children "just showed up." Respondent asserted that she "made it clear" to C.J. that she would not date him, but would be available to him to try to help him and his family.

Respondent testified that she tells all her clients that they can call her any time, and that she frequently takes calls from her clients on her cell phone. She stated that she would not turn her back on anybody in need of help, even at her own expense. As one example of her behavior, she explained that she paid for a mother and daughter to go out to dinner for the daughter's birthday because the daughter was crying and the father was not being nice to her. Specifically, respondent stated that she does not close her door to her clients, whatever day or time they need her; if she can help them, she will.

Having reviewed the entire record, including the testimony of the complainant, L.J., the former patient, C.J., and of respondent, it appears to the Board that respondent failed to maintain appropriate boundaries in her relationships with her client C.J., and that

respondent's conduct provides grounds to take disciplinary action against her license to practice clinical social work in New Jersey pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e). The parties desiring to resolve this matter without recourse to formal proceedings, and the Boards finding that entry of this Order adequately protects the public health, safety, and welfare, for good cause shown:

IT IS ON THIS 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF July, 2008  
HEREBY ORDERED AND AGREED THAT:

1. Respondent's license to practice social work shall be and hereby is suspended for a minimum period of eighteen (18) months, beginning November 30, 2006, all to be stayed and served as a period of probation, contingent on compliance with the terms of this Order and the laws governing social work in the State of New Jersey. Respondent may not resume the independent practice of social work without supervision until further order of the Board. In addition, respondent may not serve as a clinical supervisor until the completion of the next biennial renewal cycle, in September 2010.

2. In the event the Board receives information which the Board in its sole discretion deems reliable that respondent has failed to comply with any of the terms of this Consent Order, the Board may immediately enter an order making respondent's period of stayed suspension active. Respondent shall have the right to apply to the Board to request a hearing, on seven (7) days' notice, for removal of the automatic suspension, but the application shall be limited to a showing that the information submitted to the Board was false or inaccurate.

3. Beginning in or about January 1, 2008, respondent's social work services shall be supervised weekly by a female New Jersey licensed clinical social worker pre-

approved by the Board following submission of her credentials to the Board. The prospective supervisor shall be provided with a copy of this Consent Order. She shall submit to the Board a curriculum vitae along with a signed copy of this Consent Order, indicating that she has read the Order and agrees to comply with its terms. Respondent and her supervisor shall meet face-to-face a minimum of once every two weeks, with the exact frequency to be determined by the supervisor, to review all of respondent's cases. In addition to a review of all client progress notes, the supervision shall focus on boundary issues and the appropriate use of transference and counter-transference in therapeutic relationships. The supervisor shall provide quarterly progress reports regarding supervision of respondent for the period of probation. An unfavorable report may be considered a violation of this Consent Order. In the event the supervisor becomes aware of a boundary violation by respondent, the supervisor shall notify the Board by telephone and in writing within twenty-four hours of learning of the events. At the conclusion of eighteen months of supervision, the supervisor shall submit to the Board a final report assessing respondent's ability to resume the independent clinical practice of social work. From November 30, 2006 until respondent obtains approval of a licensed clinical social worker supervisor, the Board will accept the supervision provided by Farheen Fahim, M.D., based on her curriculum vitae and the letter provided to the Board. Dr. Fahim must sign a copy of this Consent Order and provide it to the Board along with a more detailed report relating to her year of supervision of respondent. Supervision shall continue until further order of the Board approving discontinuance.

4. Respondent shall successfully complete ten (10) credits of continuing education in courses relating to boundary issues. Respondent shall submit the specific

courses proposed to satisfy this requirement to the Board for approval within sixty (60) days of the entry of this Final Order, and shall complete the courses within the period of probation set forth in paragraph 1 herein. These courses are in addition to the regularly required continuing education hours. In partial satisfaction of this requirement, respondent has submitted proof of completion of a clinical supervision course, including five ethics credits, and an Elite CME course, with four hours of ethics. Respondent shall complete the remaining course credit within the time set forth in this Order. Respondent shall provide the Board with proof of successful completion for each course taken.

5. Respondent is hereby assessed civil penalties, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-22, in the amount of \$1,000 for the conduct described herein. Payment of the civil penalties is hereby stayed pending respondent's compliance with the other requirements of this Order. In the event respondent demonstrates full compliance, the civil penalties will no longer be due and payable. In the event respondent fails to comply with any of the terms of this Order, including timely payment of the costs set forth in paragraph 6, the full amount of the civil penalty will be due and payable. Payment shall be submitted by certified check or money order made payable to the State of New Jersey and shall be sent to Kay McCormack, Executive Director, at the address set forth in paragraph 6. Subsequent violations will subject respondent to enhanced penalties pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-25.

6. Respondent shall be assessed the costs of the State's investigation in this matter in the amount of \$5,954.04. Payment of costs shall be made by certified check, attorney's check or money order, made payable to the State of New Jersey, and sent to Kay McCormack, Executive Director, Board of Social Work Examiners, 124 Halsey Street, Sixth Floor, P.O. Box 45033, Newark, New Jersey 07101. Payment of the costs may be


made in twelve monthly installments of \$496.17 per payment. The first payment shall be due simultaneously with the signing of this Order, with each installment due on the first of each month until payment is completed. In the event timely payment is not made, the entire balance will be immediately due and payable.

## NEW JERSEY BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

By: 

Doreen J. Bobby, MSW, LCSW  
Board President

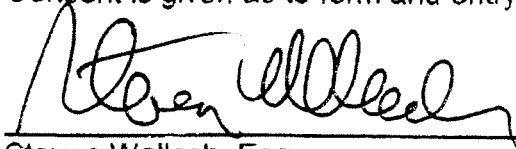
I have read and understand the  
within Consent Order and agree  
to be bound by its terms. Consent  
is hereby given to the Board to  
enter this Order.



Christine Robertello, MSW, LCSW

6/24/08  
Date

Consent is given as to form and entry of this Order.



Steven Wallach, Esq.  
Attorney for Christine Robertello, MSW, LCSW

7/6/08  
Date

I have read the attached Consent Order.  
I agree to supervise Christine Robertello's clinical  
practice of social during face-to-face sessions,  
and to report quarterly to the Board regarding her progress,  
as set forth above.



Supervisor Signature

Print name: PATRICIA CORLETT License #: 44SC00662000

Telephone #

(including area code and extension number)

908-656-0047